

**Frank Blethen
Publisher
The Seattle Times**

Dear Frank,

We write to express our frustration that The Seattle Times Co. is publishing advertisements endorsing one of the state's two candidates for governor, as well as a statewide referendum campaign.

We reporters, photographers, editors, columnists, producers and artists work every day to carry out this newspaper's mission to communicate the news to the Northwest in as fair and objective a manner as possible. We are proud of our stewardship role and your continuous support over the years, despite significant financial burdens.

That is why the decision to publish these ads is so disappointing. It threatens the two things we value the most, the traits that make The Seattle Times a strong brand: Our independence and credibility.

We know you value those things, too. The Seattle Times Company has done an exemplary job providing value to advertisers while also practicing independent journalism.

The company has explained this decision as a creative attempt to grow revenue during the political ad season. In this economic environment initiatives for more revenue are welcomed.

But consider its possible effect on The Seattle Times' core mission, journalism.

We strive to remain independent from the institutions we cover. We shine a light on the process from the outside. We are not part of the process.

This ad campaign threatens to compromise that integrity. By sponsoring an ad for one gubernatorial candidate, The Seattle Times – the entire company – has become one of the top contributors in support of that candidate's campaign. We are now part of a campaign's machinery, creating a perception that we are not an independent watchdog.

The publication of the first ad came one day after The Seattle Times showed its commitment to old-fashioned independent journalism by sponsoring a debate between the two candidates, moderated by one of our political reporters. During that debate, both candidates pointed to stories or editorials written by our staff to support their points. To the candidates and the viewing public, we weren't part of one campaign or another. We were the arbiters, a trusted, third-party source of information. That is core to our identity.

The ads undermine the work we do and threaten to muddy that perception with the readers who rely on us.

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Lau Lati Uno
Lynn Thompson
Steve Mitchell
Emile Hagg [signature]
Krisna Jackson
Kathryn Joy
Ala Berner
Rick Lund
Michael Lindblom
Sanjay Bhatt
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Sun Keller
Holly I Huhle
Brian J. Cantrell
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Michele Brock
Keith Ervin
B. [signature]
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Enka J. Knetz
Kelly Shee

Quinty Ray

Melissa Allison
Ratz Wong

Mark Noulis Mida/Beras

Rob Denilo

Holly L. Hube

Carol McCloskey

Thron Kearns gabriel campuzano

Ken Lambert

Steph F. Rungman

GREG GILBERT

Christine Willmsen

Lauren Pakian
Cathy McLain
Katie Greene
Laura Brown

Quell M. Orr

Bob Rognan
Lynn Thompson

Mary A. Cauffman

Jennifer Simon

Kevin D. Bay

St. Giner

Nancy Leson

Jack K.

Ken Z. Armstrong

Myrtle D. Way

Henry Ho

Hal Berntson

Bel

Jane L. MacDorel

Deborah

Amey Ryt

Brian Scholtz

For Neice

Jack

Mark Chen

Judy F. Merd

Carol Nakagawa

ALAN BERGER
Detofsci

Nina Kelly

Maureen Offner

Rich Kaima

Kenneth W. L. Smith

Andrew Garber

Keving Song

~~quincy~~
Cheryl E. Phillips

Sandi Doughton

BMF

Courtney Bethen Riffkin

Robert L. Payne

Misha Benson

Bettina Hansen